

Complementary and Alternative Therapies

A Guide for People Living
with HIV/AIDS



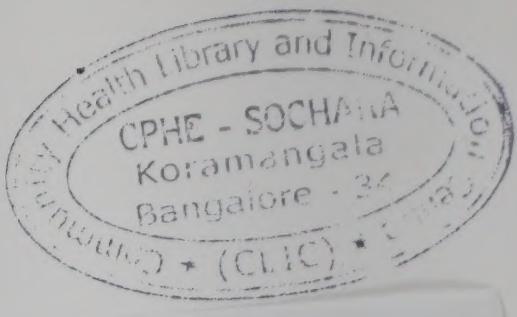
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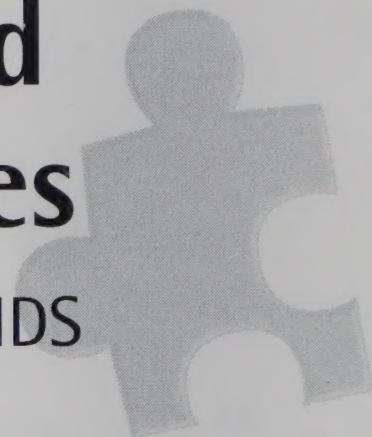


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Complementary and Alternative Therapies

A Guide for People Living with HIV/AIDS



"Access to quality medical care and treatment, including complementary and experimental therapies, must be equitable and guaranteed."

(from NAPWA Declaration of the Rights of People With HIV/AIDS)

This booklet is intended to provide an introduction to the contribution that complementary and alternative therapists can make to the treatment strategies of HIV-positive people. It also aims to empower and enable readers to make informed decisions about complementary and alternative therapy options available to them.

This booklet is not a comprehensive guide to complementary and alternative therapies, nor does it recommend or endorse any particular

form of treatment, conventional (medical) or complementary and alternative, referred to in this booklet.

Responsibility for the proper use of the information contained in this booklet rests entirely and solely with the individual. NAPWA recommends that any complementary and alternative treatment decisions be taken in consultation with a qualified medical practitioner.

Acknowledgments

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INDEX

Introduction	1
Choosing and using a therapy	2
Choosing a Practitioner or Therapist	5
Acupuncture	8
Aromatherapy	9
Bach Flower Remedies	11
The Bowen Therapeutic Technique	13
Chiropractic	15
Herbalism	16
Homeopathy	18
Hypnotherapy	20
Iridology	21
Massage	22
Meditation	23
Naturopathy	24
Nutrition and Diet	25
Reflexology	27
Reiki – The Usui System of Natural Healing	29
Shiatsu	30
Traditional Chinese Medicine	32
Vitamin/Mineral Supplements	35
Yoga	37
Useful telephone numbers	39

Introduction

This information booklet is intended to provide an introduction to the contribution that may be made by complementary and alternative therapies to the treatment strategies for HIV-positive people. It also aims to empower and enable readers to make informed decisions about the great range of complementary and alternative treatment and therapy options available. This booklet will introduce you to several complementary and alternative therapies available to HIV-positive people.

The National Association of People Living with HIV/AIDS (NAPWA) does not advocate the superiority of any form of treatment, whether conventional Western/orthodox or complementary and alternative. However, we advocate the need for people with HIV/AIDS, as well as their medical practitioners, or doctors, and service providers, to be fully informed when making treatment decisions. One of the difficulties faced by many people with HIV/AIDS and their medical practitioners has been to obtain reliable information about complementary and alternative therapies.

We hope that medical practitioners and health care professionals, in particular, will access the information provided in this booklet in order to expand their knowledge of therapies and treatments which remain outside a conventional medical frame of reference. It is hoped that this information booklet will provide some understanding of the rationale behind the complementary and alternative therapies which may be used by HIV-positive people. We also hope that it will promote

a greater understanding of the role which these therapies may play in developing treatment strategies for people with HIV/AIDS.

This information booklet has been researched, written and edited by people who have personal experience of complementary and alternative therapies, and who retain a critical attitude to the field. It was produced with the assistance and advice of complementary and alternative therapists and practitioners Australia-wide.

Appropriate terminology

We have used the terms *complementary* and *alternative* simply to describe how the therapy is used in relation to Western/orthodox medicine: either to assist or replace it.

We have used the term *holistic* to describe an approach to health and disease which takes into account the role of the mind, body, spirit, and emotions in explaining the source and development of illness, making a diagnosis and offering treatment. Any form of medicine, whether complementary and alternative or conventional Western/orthodox, can be practised in a holistic way.

We have used the terms *practitioner*, *therapist* and *teacher* to describe the range of professionals in the field of complementary and/or alternative therapies and treatments.

Choosing and using a therapy

This information booklet offers some ideas that may be useful if you are considering using a complementary or alternative therapy. It looks at a range of issues you may wish to consider when thinking about your needs.

When will a therapy be useful?

You don't have to be seriously ill to use a complementary or alternative therapy. Many people use such therapies in order to maintain good health and a sense of well-being in the same way as they may have incorporated exercise and diet into their everyday lives. For many people, using complementary or alternative therapies has enriched their quality of life by improving their physical, mental, emotional or spiritual well-being at different stages of their lives.

In order to know whether you want to use a complementary or alternative therapy, it may be helpful at first to undergo a general health assessment. In doing so, you should take stock of both your physical and emotional states of being. What physical problems do you want to relieve?

What emotional problems do you want to deal with? After all, holistic therapy is as much concerned with the mind and the emotions as with the body. Think about yourself, your relationships with other people and your ability to manage stress. It may be useful to talk to a friend or a counsellor and identify

sources of stress and dissatisfaction in your life.

You may already have a feeling as to whether complementary or alternative therapeutic intervention may be of use to you. It is important to consider your emotional symptoms alongside your physical symptoms.

If you feel distressed or unable to cope with a physical problem, you may find that a complementary or alternative therapy has as much to offer in terms of enabling you to feel calmer and more able to cope as it does in terms of symptom relief. You may find that you simply have more energy to look after yourself. Taking care of yourself is an essential part of the healing process.

Finding the appropriate therapy

Your choice of therapy may be influenced by a number of factors.

Is the therapy available in your area? Will you have to pay for it, or is a concessionary payment scheme available? Is this form of therapy something you are likely to feel comfortable with? Some people are scared of needles, for example; this may make acupuncture a daunting process. Other people may find the prospect of being touched by another person during a massage quite unsettling. For others, treatment such as homeopathy, which superficially resembles conventional drug treatment, may seem more familiar than other forms of complementary or alternative treatment.

You may have particular needs which are not directly related to HIV-infection. For example, you may be drug dependent. In this case, you

may want to find out what particular therapies have to offer in terms of the treatment of addiction, and how these may assist the process of withdrawing from drugs or allow you to cope with anxiety and stress following withdrawal from drugs.

If you already have one or two complementary or alternative therapies in mind, then begin by exploring these therapies in more detail before you make any appointments. Have a look at the complementary and alternative therapies introduced in this booklet if you are unsure or don't know what a specific therapy might have to offer.

Clarifying your treatment aims

Before choosing a particular complementary or alternative therapy it is a good idea to clarify for yourself what you hope to gain from it.

This process can help you with your treatment options, both complementary or alternative and medical, and ensure that your therapist or practitioner is clear on your needs.

You may find that not all your needs will be met by a particular therapy. You may choose to combine different therapies, or alter a therapy to suit your needs or lifestyle.

Many HIV-positive people choose to combine complementary and alternative therapy with mainstream medical treatment. Remember that complementary and alternative therapies can meet some of these aims, but not necessarily all of them for each person.

Following is a list of possible benefits you may be seeking from a particular treatment. You may wish to make a list of which of these goals are important to you, and

establish which specific treatment aim(s) you wish to pursue:

- stress reduction and improvements in psychological health;
- pain relief;
- prevention of the development of opportunistic infections;
- treatment for side-effects of conventional medication;
- improvement of energy levels and quality of life; and/or
- treatment to strengthen the immune system and reduce levels of virus without, or combined with, the use of allopathic medication.

Your treatment goals will help you select which therapy(-ies) may be the most appropriate to help you achieve these. They are useful in communicating to your therapist or practitioner what you hope to gain from your treatment, and assist the therapist in developing the most appropriate and effective treatment regime for you.

Problems to consider

Your expectations should be realistic. Can this therapy relieve your symptoms or help you cope with them? Can your quality of life improve as a result of a particular therapy or treatment? Beware of pressures and promises that push a picture of "the truth" or "a dramatic cure".

Good therapists or practitioners will not tell you what to do. They will help you to take responsibility for your life and to make

decisions. They can help facilitate what you want to achieve by supporting you in making your own choices. Some therapies may have side-effects, such as making you feel drowsy for a while. Others, such as acupuncture and homeopathy, can cause temporary fluctuations in energy. Aromatherapy may mean that you keep out of the sun after using some oils. Find out about any possible side-effects and contraindications which may be related to any treatment or therapy you are interested in using.

Certain complementary or alternative forms of therapy should not be used if you suffer from certain conditions. For example, if you suffer from varicose veins, lymphatic drainage massage should be avoided; and some aromatherapy oils should be avoided during pregnancy. Make sure you inform your practitioner or therapist of any medical condition you may have so that he or she can choose the safest treatment for you.

Combining conventional treatments and complementary therapies

Most HIV-positive people who use complementary and/or alternative forms of therapy combine these with conventional, medical forms of treatment. For example, you may choose to use a combination of anti-viral and opportunistic disease prevention treatments in combination with stress reduction and vitamin and mineral supplementation, as well as use a number of stress reduction therapies, such as massage, yoga, aromatherapy and/or meditation.

Virtually everyone who uses complementary and/or alternative therapies has constructed

their own programme. Although this often requires some initial research, it is ultimately through testing different complementary and/or alternative treatments that you will discover which of these prove most beneficial to you.

It is essential that anyone who wishes to use, or is using, a complementary and/or alternative therapy or treatment be aware of the fact that very little information exists with regard to the possible negative side-effects and/or interactions between different forms of complementary and/or alternative and conventional Western/orthodox, or allopathic, therapy or treatment.

Informing doctors and therapists

If you have decided to include a complementary and/or alternative therapy in your health care, a good working relationship with your medical practitioner, or doctor, can maximise the benefits you gain from therapies. Your doctor will be able to monitor your progress and advise you of current medical opinion on drug treatment.

Any decision involving the use of any complementary and/or alternative therapy or treatment should be made only in consultation and discussion with your medical practitioner, or doctor, as well as a qualified complementary and/or alternative practitioner. Both your medical practitioner and complementary and/or alternative practitioner should be informed of all forms of treatment you are currently using.

Choosing a Practitioner or Therapist

You are most likely to respond well to particular treatments if you have a good relationship with your practitioner. It is therefore important to choose your practitioner carefully. When deciding whether a practitioner is suitable for you, you may wish to consider the recommendations of others who have been treated by this practitioner, his/her general approach to your situation, the time s/he spends with you, and how your questions are being answered. Trust your intuition and don't be afraid to shop around! The answers you receive from a practitioner to the following important questions may help you decide whether s/he is suitable for you.

What is the treatment you offer, and how can it benefit me?

You may already have some idea of the form a treatment may take and how it works, but it is always useful to hear from the practitioner about his/her philosophy and practice, and what benefits you can expect from the proposed treatment. In every field of complementary and alternative therapy, practitioners will develop their own style of treatment according to their experience with the individuals they see.

Claims of benefit need to be scrutinised very carefully. Claims that any treatment can cure

AIDS completely or reverse HIV antibody status from positive to negative should make you immediately wary. Claims that certain opportunistic infections have been cured by complementary and/or alternative treatment should be treated very carefully.

What is your experience in treating people with HIV/AIDS?

HIV-positive individuals may approach a practitioner either when HIV-positive but without symptoms, when experiencing symptoms of immune deficiency, or when experiencing an acute, life-threatening condition. Some practitioners see people at each of these stages. Others tend to see only those with serious symptoms or only people with minor symptoms. All these factors influence the amount of knowledge a practitioner will have, and what s/he can offer you.

If the practitioner tells you that his/her experience lies largely with HIV-positive people who are well, it can be difficult to evaluate the success of a particular therapy. If the practitioner tells you that his/her experience lies largely in treating people with symptoms, find out what the symptoms are and how the treatment may be of benefit in treating those symptoms.

Ask if you can be put in touch with other people who have been treated by this practitioner. A cooperative practitioner will be able to do this without compromising the confidentiality of the person seeking treatment.

You may also need to find out what proof the practitioner has that the treatment works. Practitioners may seek to assure you of the effectiveness of the treatment by citing cases of success with other individuals.

Written testimonials or scientific studies are no substitute for speaking with someone about their experience of a treatment.

What experience and training do you have for diagnosing symptoms?

It's important that your practitioner has a basic understanding of immune dysfunction and knows about the symptoms of AIDS-related illnesses.

If they don't have this knowledge, complementary and alternative practitioners may miss symptoms which indicate a declining immune system. A trained and experienced practitioner will notice such symptoms and advise a visit to your doctor.

Can this treatment be combined with conventional medication?

Some therapists may insist that you do not use any other therapies while under their care. This may, or may not, suit your treatment goals or your approach to managing HIV/AIDS and must be considered with great care. You may wish to combine different complementary and/or alternative therapies, or combine these with conventional medications. It is very important to tell your complementary and/or alternative therapy practitioner what treatment you are receiving from your doctor.

It is also essential that you inform your doctor of any complementary and/or alternative treatment you are receiving, so that this can be taken into account when investigating possible drug interactions – or sudden improvement or deterioration in your health.

How much will it cost and do you have a discount scheme?

Charges vary according to the therapy, and it is important that you establish the cost of the therapy before the initial consultation which is likely to last longer and cost more than subsequent sessions. There is usually a set cost for each consultation, plus the cost of any prescribed treatments. If the practitioner seems too expensive, s/he may be able to offer you discounted, or concessionary, rates. You may be able to purchase some treatments more cheaply by shopping around. Complementary and/or alternative therapies can be expensive because most of them are not covered by either public or private medical insurance schemes.

Some AIDS Councils and People Living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA) organisations provide access to free or subsidised complementary or alternative therapists, and will be able to tell you if any financial assistance is available to help you pay for consultations or treatments with your own therapist. These organisations may also offer cheap bulk purchase of vitamins and some herbal mixtures.

What are your qualifications?

This is an important question to ask your practitioner or therapist, because different professional associations have different

standards of training and differing philosophies. Membership of a professional association does not always guarantee competence. Unlike doctors and other medical professionals, complementary and alternative practitioners may not necessarily be subject to disciplinary procedures which can weed out clearly incompetent or unscrupulous practitioners. In fact, most complementary and alternative practitioners work relatively unsupervised, and this is why word of mouth recommendation or warning from friends or local AIDS Councils and PLWHA organisations may be useful.

Are you prepared to visit me at home or in hospital, if necessary?

Consider your needs. If you are hospitalised, will this practitioner come to hospital to offer advice and continue this course of treatment? In some circumstances, this is possible, although not all doctors and nursing staff may be equally welcoming to complementary and alternative therapists. Such therapists may be resistant to visiting people in hospital because of past experience of poor cooperation from medical and/or nursing staff, and possibly also because of the time and travelling costs involved. In case you have any problems in this regard, contact your local AIDS Council or PLWHA organisation for assistance.

Acupuncture

Background

Acupuncture is an ancient system of healing which has developed over thousands of years as part of the traditional medicine of China, Japan and other eastern countries. The practice of acupuncture began with the discovery that stimulation of specific areas on the skin affects the functioning of certain organs. In the West, acupuncture has been misleadingly publicised as only being helpful under scientific conditions, such as pain relief. In fact, acupuncture is claimed to be very effective in a wide range of conditions by stimulating the mind's and body's own healing response and processes.

How does it work?

During the first consultation, the practitioner aims to determine the nature of the disharmony in the person's mind and body. A detailed understanding is required of the person's symptoms, medical history and lifestyle. Diagnosis may also include examination of the tongue for its structure, colour and coating, and the pulses at the wrist, which are felt for their quality, rhythm and strength.

During acupuncture treatment, very fine needles, which are used to influence the movement of *qi* (flow of energy) in defined

pathways connecting all parts of the body, are either briefly inserted, or left in place for up to 20 or 30 minutes, depending on the effect required. During this time, the individual may experience a heavy sensation in the limbs and a pleasant feeling of relaxation.

Using aseptic techniques in needle preparation is essential to prevent transmission of infection, e.g. HIV/AIDS or any of the Hepatitis strains. The preferred method is to use single-use, disposable needles.

Sometimes, a herbal preparation, known as "moxa", is smouldered on or held near to the acupuncture point and removed when it begins to feel hot. Gentle electrical stimuli may also be applied through the needles, creating a sensation of tingling or buzzing. Other methods of treating acupuncture points include massage (acupressure), tapping with a rounded probe, and laser treatment. These techniques are particularly suitable for children or for people who have a genuine fear of needles.

Treatment with acupuncture can produce rapid results, but more often requires a number of treatments over a period of time. Usually, treatments are provided once or twice a week, but they may be less frequent. Sometimes the effect is quite dramatic and the person may only need one or two treatments. Sometimes the effect is subtle and may require treatment for several months. However, there is usually some change after about five treatments.

Aromatherapy

Background

Aromatherapy can be broadly defined as 'the use of pure essential oils to seek to influence, to change or modify, mind, body or spirit, physiology or mood'. Although the use of essential oils for healing is estimated to date back some 5000 years, there has been a resurgence in this form of healing during recent decades.

Aromatherapy acts in accordance with holistic principles by awakening and strengthening the patient's vital energies and self-healing capabilities, thus having a direct effect on the body, mind, and soul. Essential oils can deeply influence our psychic equilibrium, or psychological well-being, and regulate physical imbalances. The holistic approach of aromatherapy aims to address the treatment of many common ailments and conditions associated with the circulatory, respiratory, musculoskeletal, reproductive, integumentary (skin-related), nervous, lymphatic, immune, and digestive systems.

The main benefits of an aromatherapy treatment are often associated with the pleasant smells of the essential oils, which have a predominantly psychological effect. The essential oils are usually administered by massage, in an oil vapouriser, or added to baths. Used in these ways, essential oils add a sense of luxury to the treatment and have a relaxing effect.

Aromatherapy is popular because it makes use of two close-range senses: touch and smell.

It is a very pleasant therapy, with potentially powerful medicinal applications. Some essential oils have powerful anti-bacterial properties, and may even rival antibiotic drugs in their effectiveness.

Other essential oils have psychotherapeutic applications, relieving stress, depression, insomnia, and pre-menstrual tension syndrome.

How does it work?

Essential oils have the ability to directly affect the brain and, consequently, many psychological and physiological processes. This is the reason for the efficient use of so many different ways of applying aromatherapy: essential oils can be inhaled through vapourisers and can also be applied through baths and massage. These forms of application are used, in particular, in psychoaromatherapy for the treatment of depression, sleep disorders, stress symptoms, and anxiety.

When absorbed through the skin, essential oils can reach the organs to be treated through the connective and lymphatic tissues and the circulatory system. Excretion of the oils from the body takes place mainly through the lungs and kidneys. Essential oils greatly support the skin, the largest organ of the body, in its many functions. When applied in diluted forms, they are used for massage, in therapeutic baths, and for compresses. But again, the effect is a holistic one: body and soul benefit at the same time.

In Australia, essential oils are most commonly used in massage, inhalations, and baths, whereas in France, for example, they are often

taken internally, a form of application which is best left to French medical aromatherapists. Improper use of essential oils could be very harmful to a person's health. In cases of serious illness, aromatherapy should not be applied without the advice of a physician or health practitioner trained in aromatherapy.

Aromatherapy works well as an adjunct to other types of treatment. Every holistic therapy may be strengthened in its effectiveness when essential oils are part of the treatment. Bach flower therapy, for example, is very compatible with aromatherapy. On the other hand,

aromatherapy and homeopathy should not be combined. The essential oils may cancel out the effects of homeopathic remedies. This applies, in particular, to the internal use of essential oils, as well as the external use of camphor, mint and chamomile. It is recommended that these be avoided altogether during homeopathic treatment. It is important that you discuss every aspect of your aromatherapy treatment with your therapist and the therapist(s) involved in any other treatment(s) you may be using at the same time, as well as your medical practitioner.

Bach Flower Remedies

Background

Bach flower remedies, which are prepared from flower essences derived from wild plants, are primarily used to treat emotional conditions.

In the 1930s, the English physician Dr Bach introduced a method, developed by him, of preparing remedies from the essences of 39 wild flower plants. This made an important impact on the world of natural medicine. Dr Bach originally trained as a bacteriologist and pathologist prior to the First World War. As he became disillusioned with orthodox medicine, he became involved with homeopathy. While working in this area, he became aware of the need for remedies based on the individual's emotional condition. This arose out of his increasing awareness of the person as a whole being, rather than as a set of symptoms. He came to the conclusion that many physical conditions result from negative states of mind, apprehension, apathy, and irritability.

Abandoning the empirical approach of orthodox medicine, Dr Bach began to work in a more intuitive fashion, concentrating on communicating with flowering plants in order to understand their specific properties.

Many people, including medical practitioners, believe in the effectiveness and use of Bach flower remedies.

How does it work?

Flower essences are liquid preparations, containing only minute traces of actual flowers, which convey the vibrational patterns and essences of specific flowers. Their action is, therefore, subtle and extends beyond the physiological. Their action is not biochemical, but vibrational. These gentle essences enjoy a reputation of being very safe. They have no apparent side-effects and are claimed to be non-toxic. Some people state that they don't "feel" any change or effect from using flower essences. However, many people find the essences provide an essential factor in their healing process. Each person responds to flower essences according to their inner rhythm and needs.

It is widely believed that there is a clear relationship between physical illness, stress and emotional/mental outlook. Flower essences can help address issues which often underlie stress and health problems, helping to "untie" or release these emotional and mental energy knots. Flower essences can help transform negative emotions, attitudes and patterns of behaviour to enhance one's development, growth and awareness.

Flower essences can also expand our understanding of health care, recognising the interweaving of spiritual, mental, emotional and physical aspects of wellness.

How are flower essences used?

Generally, people take a few drops several times per day. Some people adhere to a strict schedule of a specified number of drops, two or three times a day. Others find it much more

helpful to use them as required. Particularly in acute situations, it can be helpful to take a remedy more often. Since flower essences work primarily at a vibrational level, and there is little, if any, actual physical substance in the remedies, there are no known side-effects.

Some people are very strict about when and how to take flower essences, treating them like homeopathic remedies, which are ideally not taken with food, along with other restrictions. Flower essences can be added to salads, juices, food and drinking water with great results. Cooking with flower essences is not advised, as they are sensitive to temperature.

They must be protected from heat, light and cold. A fun way of using flower essences is to put a few drops in your warm bath and relax.

Some people may even use a flower essence spray for their home or work environment.

Although Bach flower remedies are sometimes prescribed by herbalists and homoeopaths, they are well-suited to self-help, as they are harmless and inexpensive. Bach flower essences usually come in small amber glass bottles and are available from homeopathic pharmacies and many healthfood stores.

The best known of these remedies is the "Rescue Remedy" which is said to be invaluable in cases of shock and distress and induces calm and decreases anxiety. Some have claimed that these kinds of benefit derive from

the alcoholic tincture in which the flower essences are held.

However, it is difficult to deny the anecdotal evidence of so many enthusiasts who swear by the restorative powers of flower remedies.

It is important to note that flower essences work most beneficially as part of a holistic health care programme which includes exercise, a nourishing diet, stress reduction techniques, inner work, play, and rest. They are not a substitute for medical attention or professional psychological counselling. If you are ill, please consult a qualified physician.

Dr Bach's legacy

Dr Bach felt that his 39 flower essences provided the complete flower essence kit for all time and stated no others would be necessary.

In fact, his legacy spawned an era of avid flower essence research and discovery. There are currently hundreds of flower essences available from all over the world. There are even Flower Essence Pharmacies in existence that stock a multitude of flower essences available world-wide. Dr Bach's Collected Writings can be used as a foundation of information by anyone who wishes to understand both Bach's approach and flower essences as remedies.

The Bowen Therapeutic Technique

Background

The Bowen Therapeutic Technique was developed by the late Thomas Bowen during the 1950s and early 1960s in Geelong, Victoria. Bowen's natural gift and ability to recognise and reduce minute muscle tensions enabled him to develop a system aimed to program moves which would counteract specific body conditions.

In 1986, Oswald Rentsch, who studied under Bowen, documented his work and was commissioned by Bowen to teach the Technique, and his wife, Elaine, established the Bowen Therapy Academy of Australia.

Since then the Academy has conducted seminars in Australia and worldwide, to provide an immediate working knowledge of the application of the Bowen Therapeutic Technique through demonstrations, personal tuition and detailed notes and charts.

The Bowen Technique is currently being taught and practiced world-wide. This light and pain-free vibrational therapy is now also practised in Canada, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

How does it work?

Bowen Therapy is a dynamic system of muscle and connective tissue movements that effectively, yet gently, realigns the body and

balances and stimulates energy flow, empowering the body's own resources to heal itself. It is holistic, non-invasive and can be used safely on anyone from newborns to the aged, infirm and immobile. It has been used for the fast, effective treatment of soft tissue injuries, illnesses and discomforts, including work, sports and domestic injuries, musculoskeletal problems, back and neck aches, arthritic symptoms, stress and tension discomfort, migraines, asthma, sinus and bronchial symptoms, and menstrual irregularities.

Bowen Therapy involves light, simple and pain-free vibrational therapy.

It removes soft tissue tensions, reducing muscle spasms, stimulating circulation, increasing blood supply and assisting lymphatic and venous drainage. These improvements clear dysfunctional debris, balance cellular physiology and stabilise the body physically, mentally and emotionally. They also promote the assimilation of nutrients and the elimination of toxins, resulting in an increase in joint mobility and an improvement in posture.

Treatment and training

A treatment session consists of several groups of moves, each move being specific, light and non-invasive, and there are frequent pauses between the groups of moves. People have reported "feeling" the tension release and energy flow, and a state of deep relaxation. Treatment is usually conducted with the person on soft, low beds, and most moves can be applied through light clothing. Sessions can last from 10 to 40 minutes, and relief is often

attained after the first session, with many people requiring a total of only two or three treatments, usually one week apart.

Registered instructors of the Bowen Therapy Academy of Australia conduct introductory seminar workshops to enable the students to experience the therapeutic potential of the Bowen Technique and gain a basic working knowledge of its application in order to effectively treat family and friends. No previous experience in any therapy work is necessary. Following completion of an Introductory Seminar, therapists who wish to use Bowen Therapy in their clinics can complete a six-months Practitioner Seminar in order to obtain a Diploma of Proficiency from, and be registered with, the Academy.

Following completion of an Introductory Seminar, practitioners should complete a six-months Practitioner Seminar in order to obtain a Diploma of Proficiency and be registered with the Bowen Therapy Academy of Australia. As a prerequisite to the Practitioner Seminar, therapists should have gained an adequate knowledge of anatomy, physiology and client care through certified courses. However, those who simply wish to apply Bowen Therapy on family and friends do not require such grounding in order to provide safe and effective treatment after completing the Introductory Seminar.

Chiropractic

Background

Chiropractic is a branch of healing which focuses on the relationship between the spine and function of the neuro(nerve)-musculoskeletal system. This relationship affects the restoration and preservation of health.

Chiropractic is a modern health care system based on the following premises:

- **The body is capable of healing some conditions by itself with the assistance of adequate rest, nutrition and a properly functioning nervous system, providing that no irreparable tissue damage has occurred.**
- **The nervous system (brain, spinal cord and nerves) controls and coordinates the activities of all other organs and systems of the body. This means that there is a relationship between the integrity and proper functioning of the nervous system and the proper functioning and health of the body.**
- **A loss of body framework integrity can cause a loss of nervous system integrity and function. Chiropractors use the term "subluxation" to describe these framework/nervous system dysfunctions.**

Why is the spine important?

The body framework and the nervous system are closely interrelated.

The spine is the central core of this framework, carrying our body weight and enabling us to

stand upright. It is a complex structure which consists of 24 moveable bones, or vertebrae, with shock-absorbing discs and movement-permitting joints between them. 12 pairs of ribs and hundreds of ligaments and muscles are attached to it.

The brain runs the body and is housed in, and protected by, the skull.

It controls the body via the spinal cord which is protected inside the hollow spine, and 31 pairs of nerve fibres which leave the cord through small holes between each pair of vertebrae. These nerves transmit "orders" from the brain to the organs and systems, ensuring their integrated function, and "report" back to the brain, enabling it to monitor body function.

Because of the spine's complexity, traumas, such as giving birth, falls, incorrect lifting, repetitive movement, stress, intake of toxins, and many other events, can in many ways cause subluxations and interfere with normal body function and health.

How does it work?

Chiropractors "adjust" the spine, using specific rapid thrusts delivered by hand or small instruments. These adjustments are to correct subluxations, removing interference to normal nervous system control over body function, and promoting healing and better health. Before giving adjustments, the chiropractor needs details of the client's medical history and current lifestyle, as well as perform a thorough physical examination. X-rays may be needed to determine the condition of the spine and to rule out any contraindications to adjustments. Regular check-ups are usually recommended to maintain progress.

Herbalism

Background

Herbal medicine is a system of medicine which exclusively uses plants and herbs. It is the oldest form of medicine on our planet and is still used as the primary form of maintaining health, treating illness and promoting healing by over 75 per cent of the world's population. It may provide both symptom relief and an improved level of health and vitality.

How does it work?

Herbalists prefer the whole plant form of a medicine instead of individual chemicals extracted from plants. Herbalists believe that the biological complexity of humans is ideally matched with treatments based on the biological complexity of plants.

Herbalists work on the premise that we have an innate ability to heal ourselves, and that medicines should be used to restore and support the body's own defensive and restorative mechanisms. This is the rationale behind the use of herbs as 'tonic' medicine.

While orthodox medicine uses many extracts from plants used by herbalists, e.g. digitalis extracted from foxglove and aspirin from the willow tree are well-known, herbal practitioners insist on the importance of using the whole herb, rather than extracts. Some herbal practitioners argue that the side-effects of orthodox treatment are increased when individual constituents are isolated and given as medication, and that plants have a delicate

chemical balance whereby their various constituents work together to promote maximum healing and avoid toxicity.

Herbalism is a holistic therapy, and clients will receive prescriptions for herbal treatment for their presenting symptoms, in accordance with their overall health, taking into account factors such as diet, lifestyle, and exercise. Consequently, herbal treatment may vary greatly between individuals who display the same type of symptoms.

The aim is to restore the body's vital energy and to help it find its own self-healing mechanism. The emphasis is on strengthening the system rather than attacking the disease. Nevertheless, although herbal treatment is not a "magic bullet" cure, most herbalists claim that if someone feels better in the first two to three weeks of treatment, s/he will probably respond well in the longer term.

The philosophy of herbalism is to treat "gently over a longer time". Herbalism has also been proven to be of great benefit to individuals suffering from an acute illness, e.g. flu, cold, head-aches, etc., by providing immediate symptomatic relief.

How can herbs help against HIV/AIDS?

There are three main functions of herbal treatment depending on a person's symptoms:

- * elimination and detoxification;
- * health maintenance (where disease symptoms are counteracted and the body's defences stimulated and stress is relieved); and
- * toning and nourishment of the body.

The emphasis of using herbal medicine is, as in the treatment of all diseases, on strengthening the whole system rather treating only the disease. When treating HIV/AIDS, care needs to be taken when considering the stimulation of the body's defence system. Echinacea is often used by herbalists as an immune stimulator, but if immune reserves are low, which is usually the case with HIV-positive people, this herb may be too strong. Echinacea is generally avoided by herbalists in treating people whose CD4 count has fallen below 200, or so.

The role of polysaccharides, chains of sugars present in some plants, in stimulating without damaging the immune system is being researched in the United States, Japan and Switzerland. Herbal treatment has been successfully used to treat various common HIV-related conditions: tea tree oil is effective for some forms of fungal infection, as is garlic; sage has proven useful for night sweats, slippery elm for relieving diarrhoea, and thuja for warts.

Knowledge about the use of herbal treatment is fairly accessible, which can lead to ill-informed self-help for less serious conditions. The *materia medica*, or list of herbal remedies contained in herbal books, provides information on a range of recommended herbal dosages, but HIV-positive people are definitely advised to see a professional naturopath to work out an overall programme. People who use off-the-shelf remedies, or self-medication,

are more likely to experience adverse reactions, as these remedies may contain unpredictable amounts of herbs.

Herbal preparations are most commonly extracted in alcohol as tinctures or in water as teas. They can also be taken whole in tablets or capsules.

Combination with other therapies

Herbalism combines well with many therapies. However, it is advisable that you inform your naturopath, as well as your medical practitioner, of any other form of therapy(-ies) or remedy(-ies) you may be using in order to prevent any adverse side-effects and/or interactions. Generally, herbalism also combines well with orthodox treatment.

Finding a qualified practitioner

Full membership of the National Herbalists Association of Australia (NHAA) guarantees competence in herbal medicine. Full NHAA members must have completed a minimum standard of education as required by the NHAA, hold a current first aid certificate, maintain ongoing professional education, and hold adequate professional indemnity insurance. For any further information, you can call the National Herbalists Association of Australia on (02) 9211 6437, send them a fax on (02) 9211 6452, or write to them at PO Box 61, Broadway NSW 2007.

Homeopathy

Rational medicine

Homeopathy is a long established but revolutionary system of medicine which treats each person as a whole. As a scientific system it differs from all others both in its preparation of medicines and in its method of application of those medicines. When selecting a homeopathic medicine for somebody, the name of the disease and the identity of the offending bacteria is considered secondary to the symptoms expressed by that person. Homeopathic treatment is not dependent on the condition attributed to the name of a disease. Five people may all have arthritis, yet because the symptoms of the disease vary from person to person, they will each need a different medicine for treatment. Homeopathy treats everyone as a unique individual.

Natural law

Homeopathy is based on a natural law called the Law of Similars: "*What a medicine can cause it can cure*". This law was known by Hippocrates, the father of medicine in 500BC, but it has only been 200 years since the homeopathic method of its application was discovered by the brilliant German physician, Samuel Hahnemann. Hahnemann introduced a precise and systematic method of testing medicinal substances called *proving*. This method involves the administration of medicinal substances to healthy human beings (not the infirm or animals). From these tests

we find that medicines produce specific symptoms of disease in a healthy person.

These *provings* also show that each medicinal substance is capable of acting and producing symptoms on all levels of our being; mental, emotional or physical. Thus, one medicine is able to act on the whole person. The medicine which correlates to your condition will alleviate your particular disease symptoms.

How does it work?

Homeopathic medicines stimulate your own inherent healing powers to overcome your condition. Homeopathic medicines work gently and often rapidly to alleviate disease symptoms, but the duration of treatment will depend on the precise nature of your illness. As your medicine begins to take effect, you may hear yourself saying: "Well, my pain is better", and in addition to this: "I feel so much better myself". This is the effect of balancing and improving your health as a whole person.

Preparation of medicines

Homeopathic medicines are made by a special method called *potentisation*, which makes the medicinal substance employed most effective as a curative agent. The result of this process is that the homeopathic medicines only require minute doses to be effective. They are non-toxic, non-habit forming, and yet powerful. Each homeopathic prescription uses only a single medicine. This enables the homoeopath to evaluate scientifically your response to the medicine. The medicines are made from a variety of materials, mainly plants and minerals. Medicines are prepared under laboratory conditions. Their quality

is assessed and maintained at all levels of production.

Inesses and their treatment

Homeopathic medicine aims to treat both acute and chronic disease and can be fully effective over a wide range of mental and physical disorders. Homeopathic medicine may also successfully treat many acute, everyday ailments more quickly and safely than orthodox methods.

Homeopathic medicines have outstanding usefulness in First Aid—falls, sprains, bruises, burns, cuts, colds and influenza are often amenable to homeopathic medication. Family pets and farm animals can also respond well to homeopathy. As with any form of treatment, homeopathic medicine has its limitations and here your practitioner will guide and advise you.

The interview

The homeopathic interview is often an unexpected experience for newcomers. The presenting problem, history, family history, mental and emotional tendencies and other facts seemingly unrelated to your condition will be covered in detail to obtain your whole symptom picture. This is to ensure the highest quality treatment. As a consequence consultations are longer than the usually expected duration. Appointments of one and a half hours duration are not uncommon.

Standard physical examination and laboratory tests may be utilised where necessary. Homoeopaths also take into consideration orthodox medical diagnosis and any underlying pathology in the assessment and management of the case and approach to treatment.

Hypnotherapy

Background

Hypnotherapy induces a trance-like state during which the person is so deeply relaxed that the unconscious becomes accessible to suggestion. Hypnotherapy can therefore be used either to reduce or eliminate symptoms, or to assist psychological treatment, so that the therapist can explore the unconscious mind. It is unclear exactly how hypnosis works; the hypnotic state appears to exist somewhere in the hinterland between wakefulness and the unconscious.

While the hypnotic technique is relatively modern, dating from the work of Franz Anton Mesmer in the eighteenth century, there is evidence of hypnotism, or the induction of trance-like states, being used in ancient Egypt, Greece and by the Druids in Britain. Hypnotism aroused great interest during the nineteenth century, but fell into increasing disrepute in the twentieth century due to its reputation as a stage curiosity and its consequent association with quackery.

In the hypnotic state, the person's conscious mind, which is the seat of his/her critical faculties, is at rest, allowing the hypnotherapist to tap into the individual's subconscious mind. The subconscious mind is a vast storehouse of our past experience, thoughts, feelings and impressions. Accessing our subconscious mind allows the hypnotherapist to understand our

behavioural patterns, the programming we have undergone since birth, the causes of our fears, habits, personality traits, etc., and how these may need to be dealt with.

How does it work?

During a session, the person will sit or lie, either in a chair or on a couch, and will be taken through a series of relaxation exercises by the hypnotherapist who will rely on his/her voice to effect a relaxed state. While it is no longer usual for objects to be dangled in front of the person's face, this is perfectly acceptable if this is what seems necessary and fits with that person's expectations.

Once a hypnotic state has begun the individual will be gently probed to recall memories which may shed light on the problem at hand.

The therapeutic relationship is all-important as trust is an essential prerequisite for the effectiveness of this therapy. The ability to relax fully and so take best advantage of hypnosis may vary from person to person.

The number of sessions will differ according to this and the extent of the presenting problem. Individuals can also be taught self-hypnosis techniques akin to visualisation which many people report to be of great benefit.

Hypnosis and HIV/AIDS

Hypnotherapy's potential for reducing both stress levels and pain make it a useful tool for achieving an enhanced quality of life when living with HIV/AIDS. It has also been credited with helping to end different kinds of addictions, and improve incontinence, nausea and the breathing of asthmatics.

Iridology

Background

Iridology, or the analysis of the human iris, has been used since antiquity as an indicator of the overall health of a person and of past, present, and possibly future disease processes. It was reinforced by a German doctor, Dr J. Haskel Kritzer, this century and used by many naturopaths, such as the American Bernard Jensen, as a tool for diagnosing which of an individual's body processes require support. More recently, the Australian herbalist and naturopath Dorothy Hall has undertaken extensive research into iridology and published her findings in her book covering this subject. Iridology is taught in naturopathic colleges as a tool for diagnosis.

How does it work?

The iris, or coloured part of the eye, is seen as an extension of brain tissue and a receiver and reflector of light. As such, the iris registers signs which relate to physical, emotional and spiritual well-being of the whole person. These indicators change and can be observed and interpreted by a qualified iridologist. Patterns of past, present and possible future illnesses can be assessed in consultation with the person seeking treatment. A range

of naturopathic treatments can then be prescribed to improve general and immune system health. An iris torch, with a magnification of ten, is used to check the person's iris and colour, and special signs and fibres are recorded on an iris chart. This process is safe, comfortable and non-intrusive.

Every iris is as individual as people themselves, and this form of diagnosis leads to individual treatments. Sometimes a photo of the iris is taken, which can be useful in documenting long-term changes in a person's health pattern.

How can iridology help against HIV/AIDS?

Iridology can help to pinpoint which of a person's body processes require support. As such, it can be a very useful tool to discover causes of patterns of ill health. Many body processes, e.g. gastro-intestinal problems, skin problems, nervous system disorders, depression and lethargy, may be treated with appropriate herbs, vitamins and minerals, flower essences, chiropractic treatment, massage, etc. An underlying constitutional weakness may also be diagnosed and treated with various herbal medicines and homeopathic treatment. Iridology can also serve to carefully monitor the effectiveness of these treatments for the client.

Massage

Background

- **Massage is one of the oldest and simplest forms of therapy, and one of the therapies most widely offered to HIV-positive people. Its benefits are widely recognised as it is an excellent way of reducing stress and increasing a generalised sense of well-being.**

Types of massage

The main types of massage that are available include:

- Remedial massage
- Therapeutic massage
- Sports massage
- Swedish massage
- Biodynamic massage
- Aromatherapy massage and
- Holistic massage.

Many practitioners use more than one of the above types of massage.

How does it work?

Most people who receive massage report that it induces a sense of relaxation and slows their

heart rate. Touch provides a tangible sense of reassurance and support and helps reduce anxiety. Massage has been shown to reduce blood pressure, stress and anxiety levels, all of which are considered beneficial for the immune system.

Massage is applied to the muscles and ligaments, relaxing the nervous system, improving circulation, and assisting in the elimination of bodily toxins, such as lactic acid from the muscle tissue.

Massage can be quite easily combined with other therapies, but it is probably wise to let your masseur know of any other therapies you are receiving.

The form of massage you want will often depend on your needs and requests, including your experience with massage. For example, some people may rate a firm massage as a good massage. While this may be appropriate for people with well-toned muscles, it may not be what you want, especially if you are suffering from exhaustion.

Many people still associate massage with sexual activity, but most qualified masseurs see themselves solely as part of the health and therapy sector. Masseurs are used to dealing tactfully with sexual arousal as a consequence of massage, so you should not be embarrassed if this occurs.

Meditation

Background

The practice of meditation can be traced back some 5000 years, to the ancient civilisations of India, Africa and China. Although it can be found within the major religions of Hinduism, Taoism, and, more recently, in Buddhism, Christianity and Islam, the philosophical origins of meditation are purely Eastern, a tradition within which the ultimate aim of the individual was self-knowledge and self-realisation.

How does it work?

Meditation is a state of inner stillness. The process of meditation includes several stages, such as, for example, focussing on the breath, an object or the verbal or mental repetition of a word (*mantra*). The incessant mental chatter that dominates our daily life disappears. This process, with practice, can

lead one into a meditative state, in which inner peace and stillness can be experienced. Meditation, when practiced regularly, can transform all aspects of our lives, thinking, feeling, behaving and, more importantly, knowing. It enables us to look at all aspects of our lives with some detachment.

How can it help against HIV/AIDS?

Distress, anxiety and tension are incompatible with a deeply relaxed state. Daily practice of meditation will induce deep levels of relaxation which are not only relatively stress-free, but optimal to the promotion of mind/body health. Established benefits of meditation include: the enhancement of healing potential; strengthening of immune function; improvement in quality of sleep; heightened awareness and creativity; lowering of blood pressure; weakening addictive behaviour; combating fatigue; increasing motivation; and the promotion and enhancement of self-esteem.

Naturopathy

Background

Through treatment of the whole person, naturopaths deal with internal health problems and imbalances. In general, a wide range of diagnostic techniques is used to assess each client. Treatment may involve dietary changes, herbal medicines, homeopathy, bodywork, nutritional supplements, stress reduction techniques, exercise, etc.

Most naturopaths in Australia receive training in nutrition and the use of vitamins and mineral preparations, herbal remedies, homeopathy, and massage. They use different combinations of these treatments to assist your health. There are a large number of other treatments and procedures a naturopath may use, ranging from iridology to pinpoint problem areas in your body to the use of flower essences to help with emotional problems. Individual practitioners have their own preferences for what they use and in what combinations. Ideally, naturopaths will help you learn how to maintain your own health, as well as prescribe appropriate natural remedies and lifestyle changes.

Naturopathy essentially focuses on the holistic treatment of the individual by

seeking to address symptoms of illness as well as resolve underlying causes of illness. When assessing a client's general state of health, naturopaths will take into consideration the person's age, constitutional factors, past medical history, and mental, emotional and hereditary factors. Naturopaths view the relationship with the individual as a partnership; it is important for the individual to take responsibility to effect positive changes in his/her lifestyle.

How can it help against HIV/AIDS?

There is some variation amongst naturopaths as to how HIV is defined, but it is generally seen as an immune system dysfunction. Naturopaths may aim to include building and supporting the immune system in order to more effectively deal with HIV and opportunistic infections. Their approach to HIV is mainly focused on strengthening the person's general health and immune system.

Some traditional naturopathic approaches may need to be modified for an HIV-positive person. For example, raw foods may be kept to a minimum due to the danger of parasites or transmission of opportunistic infections from the soil. Fasting is also generally contra-indicated as an HIV-positive person may not have a strong enough constitution to support a fasting regime.

Nutrition and Diet

Background

"You are what you eat", so the old saying goes. Food and your body are made of the same types of chemicals: water, proteins, vitamins, minerals, carbohydrates, and fats. Each of these food types make a contribution to the overall processes of all the cells in your body.

Nutrition is an important way of helping your body heal itself, fight disease and repair itself. You could even argue that having nutritious food every day constitutes a treatment in itself. Therefore, a balanced or special diet is not an alternative treatment, but absolutely necessary for healthy living. There are two key ways in which nutrition is important to people with HIV/AIDS: you can try to avoid a number of infections that can be transmitted through food and drink, and you can try to eat as well as your income will allow.

How does it work?

Most people agree that a properly balanced diet is important to ensure that you get all the nutrients your body requires. This helps your body to absorb what it needs to replenish its stores and continue producing energy while it continues to fight infections. If you are missing vital elements in your diet you may experience a drained feeling, infections may get a stronger hold of you, or you may develop diseases which are related to malnutrition.

Dietitians and nutritionists specialise in advising people on their diets: what needs changing and how to change it. They will work with you to devise a plan that you can easily follow. This may require some changes in the way you eat at present, but feeling good and more energetic will be worth it. Ask your general practitioner or at your health clinic about seeing a dietitian or nutritionist.

How can it help against HIV/AIDS?

You may not feel like changing what you eat just because you have HIV-infection. But before you decide, it is worthwhile finding out what differences diet can make to your system and general well-being.

Anything that helps to boost your immune system and overall health deserves serious consideration.

Changes to your diet recommended by a doctor, nutritionist or dietitian can also improve or help you cope with some HIV-related symptoms such as mouth and throat infections, candida, diarrhoea, nausea, and weight loss.

They may also help you to continue to maintain your strength and eat more at times when food is not of any interest to you. For example, it is essential for people living with HIV/AIDS to keep up their clean protein levels at all times. Protein is one of the three basic food groups (next to carbohydrates and fat) and is used by the body for producing new body tissue and parts of the immune system called antibodies. Eggs, fish, and meat, for example, are good protein sources.

Everyone needs to observe good hygiene rules when preparing food, and this is particularly important for people with HIV/AIDS, and anyone else with an impaired immune system. For example, poultry and dairy products should be treated with special care as they are particularly vulnerable to contamination by bacteria. Both dietitians and nutritionists can

give you much more detailed information on this and the types of food you should avoid when your immune system function is low.

Many clinics and community health centres can arrange for you to see a qualified dietitian or nutritionist to discuss your own diet, or any specific problems that you may have.

Reflexology

Background

Reflexology, or reflex zone therapy, is a system of manipulation of pressure points in the feet. It is believed that by stimulating these points, the body's own healing mechanisms can be mobilised.

Particular areas of the body, usually the feet or hands, are seen as a map of zones which correspond to, or are linked to, other structures or organs of the body through a flow of energy. Disease or damage in one part of the body will show up in the corresponding zone on the foot and can be favourably influenced by careful work or pressure on that zone.

How does it work?

The body is said to be divided into ten vertical zones; structures and organs along these zones are connected by energy flows to areas on the foot which function as terminals for the entire zone. Pressure on a zone in the foot will stimulate various organs which are located along the same zone.

Besides taking a detailed case history, practitioners observe the state of health both through skin colour and condition, condition of bone structure and muscle tone and by careful pressure on the various reflex zones; pain may be experienced in a reflex zone if some disorder is present in an appropriate part of the body, though sometimes discomfort may be due merely to some current strain, rather than to organic disease.

Treatment is gentle, relaxing and calming; while there may be some pain, this may be accompanied by a sense of well-being. Very rarely treatment might also make you sweat, but if it causes shivering and coldness this may be due to over-stimulation and the practitioner should be informed immediately. Some side-effects may be experienced in the days following commencement of treatment; these can take the form of mild diarrhoea, sweating, runny nose, or increased passing of urine and are said to be due to increased elimination of toxins from the system.

Disorders which are said to benefit from reflexology cover a very wide area and include acne, some allergic disorders, bowel and bladder problems, menstrual problems and pain. Caution should be exercised with circulatory disorders such as varicose veins.

How can it work against HIV/AIDS?

The "hands-on", calming effect of reflexology makes it an attractive option for people with HIV/AIDS; it is useful for alleviating stress, and the importance of touch should not be underestimated for those who are dealing with a stigmatised condition. In relation to specific conditions, success has been reported with bone ache, neck stiffness and back ache, although all these problems tend to recur if treatment is not continued.

Respiratory, circulatory, excretory and digestive problems have been helped; but it is important that excessive pressure on these systems is avoided. People suffering from insomnia have responded well to reflexology.

Reflexologists will also work on zones which they believe can strengthen immune function. They will concentrate on the lymphatic and endocrine systems at all stages of treatment. They will work on the referral area to the pituitary gland, the liver, the spleen, the ileocaecal valve (the junction between the small and the large intestines), and the kidneys.

The cleansing process activated by reflexology may cause some temporary reactions. There may be increased dreaming activity, temporary mild hair loss, temporary deafness, and skin

rashes, although these side-effects are reportedly rare. Particular caution needs to be exercised by practitioners when working on people with AIDS-related pneumonia (known as "PCP", i.e. *Pneumocystis Carinii Pneumonia*), as treatment can cause an overreaction by creating too much mucous which can further weaken the individual.

It may be sometimes possible to combine reflexology with acupuncture, which may have better results when treating conditions such as arthritis.

Reiki—The Usui System of Natural Healing

Background

Reiki is a Japanese word meaning Universal Life Force energy.

When used as a therapy, Reiki is referred to as the Usui System of Natural Healing, an energy balancing technique which aims to improve and maintain good health, based on the principle that a balanced energy system leads to a healthy body and mind.

The Usui System of Natural Healing is named after its founder, Mikao Usui. The Usui system, or Reiki, dates back to late last century when Usui, an educator, was challenged by some students to explain the phenomenon of hands-on healing, as practiced by many spiritual leaders, including Jesus and Buddha. It was a challenge which led Usui to a lifetime of spiritual pilgrimage, encompassing both Christian and Buddhist teachings. One of the outcomes of Usui's pilgrimage was the introduction of Reiki to the West in the late 1930s by Mrs Hawayo Takata.

The Usui system is a living tradition which is passed on from Master to student. It is an oral tradition based on the principles of honour, respect, and personal integrity between Masters and students. Reiki is not associated with any religion, cult, or dogma.

How does a Reiki treatment work?

Reiki is administered by placing the hands gently on the client and channelling the energy through to certain parts of the head, torso, legs, and feet. Reiki treats the whole person, including the body, emotions, mind and spirit, and creates many beneficial effects, such as relaxation and feelings of peace, security, and well-being. Reiki may assist in the management of pain, relieve muscle tension and stiffness, and is meditative, providing the client with a sense of inner harmony.

A Reiki treatment will usually take between one and one-and-a-half hours. The client remains fully clothed, although the client is encouraged to loosen tight or restrictive clothing.

As the healing process involved in a Reiki treatment tends to vary with each person, it is important that you provide your medical history to and discuss all aspects of the treatment with your Reiki practitioner.

It is also advisable that any Reiki treatment be discussed with your medical practitioner. Reiki has proven effective in providing relief for a range of illnesses. Reiki generally works in conjunction with other medical and therapeutic techniques aimed at relieving medical symptoms and side-effects and promoting healing.

Shiatsu

Background

• **Shiatsu, literally translated, means finger pressure. It is a holistic healing therapy originating from the same principles as acupuncture. It works by balancing the body's vital energy flow to promote good health.**

The practitioner uses hands, fingers, elbows, knees and feet to apply pressure points and lines of energy (meridians) in the body. This affects the circulation and flow of lymphatic fluid, working on the nervous systems of the body, releasing toxins and deep-seated tensions, stimulating both the immune and hormonal systems.

Shiatsu was developed in Japan and was introduced into the West in the 1970s. Practitioners are required to complete a two-year training program in an accredited college. Subjects include Oriental philosophy and practice combined with Western anatomy, physiology, and pathology.

How does it work?

Treatment is given with the client lying on a futon (thick mat) on the floor, wearing loose, comfortable clothes, preferably natural fibre.

The practitioner will initially take a medical history to help assess the client's health condition. Through touch, the practitioner will 'diagnose' the flow of energy and treat according to the client's needs. Treatment will

support and tonify the empty, deficient meridians, dispersing the strong, full ones, thereby balancing and harmonising the energy flow. Some points may be painful, but this pain brings relief as energy flows in.

After a Shiatsu session, the client will feel relaxed with a sense of well-being. However, there may be a temporary healing crisis as toxins and negative emotions are released. This may take the form of a headache or flu-like symptoms. In case this occurs, it is important to contact the practitioner for reassurance.

Shiatsu is effective in providing relief to a large number of conditions, including headaches, migraine, respiratory conditions, such as asthma and bronchitis, sinus problems and catarrh, digestive and bowel disorders, circulatory and back problems, and rheumatic and arthritic complaints.

In particular, Shiatsu is effective in treating stress-and anxiety-related conditions, such as insomnia. The close contact between the Shiatsu practitioner and the client may also give the client a sense of reassurance and validation.

Possible risks

Shiatsu will not be given to people who have a risk of haemorrhage or thrombosis. The area around a tumour will be avoided during treatment. Because of the finger pressure involved, caution will be exercised when osteoporosis, recent tissue damage, fracture or inflammation are present. Parts of the head will be avoided where the client suffers from epilepsy or high blood pressure. This

demonstrates the importance of providing your practitioner with a very detailed and up-to-date medical history. It is advisable that any Shiatsu treatment be discussed in advance with your medical practitioner.

inding a qualified practitioner

The professional Shiatsu Therapy Association of Australia (STAA) comprises Shiatsu practitioners and students. STAA aims to

ensure a high standard of practice, with a code of ethics and competency-based standards for practitioners. You should ensure that the practitioner you contact has completed training approved by STAA. For referral to an accredited practitioner in your local area and general information, contact the STAA National Office on **(03) 9752 6711**.

Traditional Chinese Herbal Medicine

● Background

Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) includes acupuncture, herbal medicine, massage, dietary advice, and exercise posture therapy, including *qi gong*. TCM as a medical tradition was first written down more than two and a half thousand years ago. It is still the main form of medical care used by a large proportion of the world's population.

How does it work?

TCM uses a combination of herbs and acupuncture (the insertion of fine needles into certain points on the skin) to heal illness. Most of the remedies now in use by practitioners of TCM have been prescribed for hundreds of years, and a large body of knowledge has accumulated regarding their correct use and their potential side-effects.

Acupuncture treatment involves the stimulation of particular points on the body in order to relieve illness and improve the flow of energy, or *qi*, which flows through channels in the body known as meridians. These meridians link together organ systems. The insertion of needles into points along the meridians acts in the same way as throwing the switches in an electrical current; it encourages the flow of *qi* around the body to specific organs. Sometimes this is also done through finger pressure or moxibustion, the

burning of herbs above the skin. Healers have learnt to measure the strength of this energy and to detect whether there are imbalances of energy in the meridians relate to specific organs.

In TCM, illness is considered to be a consequence of an imbalance of energy in the body, which can be due to external or internal factors.

The task of the physician is to assist the individual in re-balancing the body's energies.

To assess an individual's state of health, or energy balance, a practitioner of TCM will take a detailed case history using the tongue and pulses as important diagnostic tools. The flow of energy can be assessed by testing various body pulses.

TCM has a very different understanding of the organs and the substances of the body, such as blood, fluids and its personality. Of all the forms of alternative medicine, TCM is the system which is most alien to the Western scientific, materialist view of the world.

The Chinese system of herbs differs quite significantly from Western herbal medicine. Chinese herbal medicine is used to treat deficiencies or excesses within the body and to clear disease-causing factors. Acupuncture is used to add to the effectiveness of the herbs. For example, if a practitioner decides to give treatment for a kidney energy deficiency, acupuncture treatment will be given to enhance the effects of the herbs on the functioning of the kidney energy. When treating somebody, the practitioner must take into account the individual constitution of the

person, as well as age, sex, climatic factors and environmental influences, regardless of, or in addition to, what the Western medical diagnosis may be.

How can TCM help against HIV/AIDS?

A wide range of Chinese herbs have been tested to observe their effects on the immune system. Many of the herbs which have been shown to inhibit HIV-infection appear to do so by enhancing the ability of cells to resist infection rather than by inhibiting the processes by which the virus reproduces itself. A large number of herbs have been documented in animal studies and healthy adults as increasing CD4 cell counts, white blood cell counts and many other cell-mediated immune functions.

Many other herbs have been shown to increase antibody production, regulate the production of interferon, reduce allergic reactions and increase platelets and red blood cells.

The immune enhancing effects of acupuncture have also been studied. Treatment at specific acupuncture points has been shown to increase interferon production, boost the ability of leucocytes to kill bacteria, increase red blood cells in anaemic people, and reduce pain and fevers.

Side-effects

There has been considerable publicity attached to recent reports of poisoning by Chinese herbal medicines. However, situations such as this are rare and generally involve prescriptions of raw herbs, which are extremely potent and potentially dangerous if prescribed

incorrectly or taken in too large doses. In general, prepared patent herbal medicines, either in tablet or powder form are preferred as they are easier and more palatable to take, and are equally as effective as raw herbs, with less potential for adverse side-effects. This highlights the importance for anyone who intends to use a form of TCM to seek out a well-qualified and experienced TCM practitioner.

Combining TCM with conventional medicine

In TCM, care must always be taken to avoid adverse reactions between herbs in general and excessive doses of some herbs. Mixing Chinese herbs and Western medical treatment can create problems such as the exaggeration of drug effects unless your TCM practitioner is fully aware of any other medication you are taking. It is also essential that you inform your general practitioner or specialist of any Chinese herbs you may be taking. To avoid adverse reactions between drugs and herbs, it is not recommended to commence TCM treatment with large doses of Chinese herbs. Dosages may be readjusted according to an individual's reactions, although, as noted above, potent herbal formulae tend to cause less alarming reactions if prescribed by a properly qualified and experienced TCM practitioner.

Combining TCM with other complementary and/or alternative therapies

TCM combines well with reflexology, but Chinese herbs should not be mixed with

Western herbs; however, acupuncture may be combined with Western herbs. People should always tell practitioners which therapies they are using.

Finding an experienced TCM practitioner

Some TCM practitioners use only acupuncture, whilst many others are trained in both acupuncture and Traditional Chinese herbs. Membership of professional associations, such as the Register of Chinese Herbal Medicine, the Acupuncture Ethics and Standards Organisation/Australian Acupuncture Association (AES/A.Ac.A.), the Traditional Medicine of China Society of Australia Inc., or the Australian Alliance of Chinese Medicine Associations Inc., often indicates training in both fields. The Australian Natural Therapists

Association (ANTA) represents members who are trained in Acupuncture and Traditional Chinese Medicine.

You should be suspicious if the practitioner seems uncomfortable about answering questions. What experience does the practitioner have with HIV/AIDS? What treatment regime does s/he propose? Experience with cancer may be helpful since it is also a long-term chronic illness. It is also important to know about hygiene: are disposable needles used, or does the practitioner have the appropriate sterilisation procedures for cleaning needles? By calling **1800 817 577**, you may locate a practitioner in your area. Your TCM practitioner should readily provide you with any information about his/her professional background.

Vitamin/Mineral Supplements

Background

Vitamins and minerals are a group of nutrients which occur naturally in food and are essential for the proper functioning of the human body.

An imbalance of vitamins and minerals can cause poor health including impairment of the immune system.

In people with HIV/AIDS, an imbalance in vitamin and mineral levels can be caused by a poor diet, which is commonly associated with lack of appetite, and poor absorption from the gut due to infection and other reasons. Vitamin and mineral deficiencies can also result from certain drug treatments. While many people rely on vitamins in food, people with HIV/AIDS often benefit from vitamin and mineral supplements, particularly when their diet lacks sufficient nutrients.

If you are confused about vitamins and minerals, you are not alone! Researchers are still debating the role of vitamin and mineral supplements for people with HIV/AIDS. No-one really knows the extent to which taking vitamins and minerals may affect the progression of HIV-disease. However, it is known that many vitamins and minerals can be harmful if taken in excess. Most researchers agree that some vitamin and mineral supplementation is beneficial, and there is evidence to suggest

that HIV can deplete the levels of some vitamins and minerals from your system. Informed naturopathic advice is strongly recommended when considering taking vitamin and mineral supplements.

Vitamin and mineral supplements

Following are some of the vitamin and mineral supplements which maybe available through your local AIDS Council:

- **Fortified Vitamins and Minerals** these provide adequate levels of Vitamins A, C, E, B6, Folate, B12, Copper, Zinc, Iron Magnesium and Potassium; essential for optimal immune function
- **Vitamin A** essential mucose membrane support and helps prevent cross-infection
- **Vitamin C** enhances immune system; some anti-viral properties; helps eliminate toxins
- **Vitamin E** promotes activities of CD4 cells and stimulates antibody response
- **Balanced B** a formulation of B-group vitamins balanced according to ratios as they occur in normal foods
- **Vitamin B1** essential for efficient use of carbohydrates by the body
- **Vitamin B2** an essential anti-oxidant; deficiencies may result in skin damage and hair loss
- **Vitamin B6** essential for production of new cells and maintaining immunity; deficiency may result in neurological disorders, e.g. anxiety and memory loss

- **Vitamin B12** may protect against nerve damage, e.g. peripheral neuropathy
- **AD-S** a herbal formula to assist in times of mental and physical stress, therefore indirectly helping to sustain immune function
- **Acidophilus** assists to maintain normal flora in the gut
- **Coenzyme Q10** can reduce fatigue and is an immune enhancer
- **Selenium** helps detoxify the body and boost the immune system (available through prescription only)
- **Spiralina** a complete source of protein and can assist with reducing weight loss
- **Supplements** supplements, such as *Sustagen, Ensure* and *Advera*, are useful in the management of dietary problems, e.g. loss of appetite, weight loss, etc.

Yoga

Background

Yoga is an ancient Indian holistic form of self-healing, dating back 5000 years. The self-healing comes about through self-knowledge and mastery over body and mind. Yoga is a set of psycho-physiological techniques, or practices, which aim to improve the physical, mental and spiritual well-being.

How does it work?

The role of Yoga in the management of people with HIV/AIDS has been developed by a number of practitioners world-wide. A Yoga programme for people with HIV/AIDS generally includes postures (*asanas*), deep relaxation (*yoga nidra*), breath control (*pranayama*) and meditation.

These Yogic practices aim to boost the immune system and bring about balance, inner strength, physical, mental and spiritual harmony and self-awareness. Yoga promotes relaxation and reduces stress. It empowers the individual to deal with stress in a healthy way, thereby facilitating an improved quality of life.

Postures (Asanas)

A programme of postures, or *asanas*, has been developed to strengthen and improve the flexibility of the body, stimulate different aspects of the immune system and oxygenate the system. The *asanas* which have been chosen have a direct effect on the thymus

gland (in which the CD4 lymphocytes or white blood cells mature) and stimulate and tone the adrenal glands. These *asanas* also directly stimulate the endocrinal glands, achieved through massage during the *asana* practices, balance hormone generation and rejuvenate and ensure sound nerve connections. This action assists the different components of the immune system to operate at optimum efficiency.

Deep relaxation (yoga nidra)

Yoga nidra is a lying deep relaxation practice which is used as a means of healing the body and mind through the use of visualisation and positive resolution (*sankalpa*). The *sankalpa* facilitates a new positive way of "being". This meditative practice brings about calmness, peace of mind and clarity of thought.

Breath control (pranayama)

While *asana* practices work initially at a physical level, breath control (*pranayama*, or control of the "vital energy") practices are used extensively to oxygenate the system and induce calmness and stability in mind and body. It is believed that oxygenation is an important factor in the management of HIV/AIDS, as it enhances the immune system.

Meditation

Meditation is communion with the "inner self", or the deeper or intuitive part of our consciousness, transcending the external self and the merging of the individual consciousness with the universal consciousness.

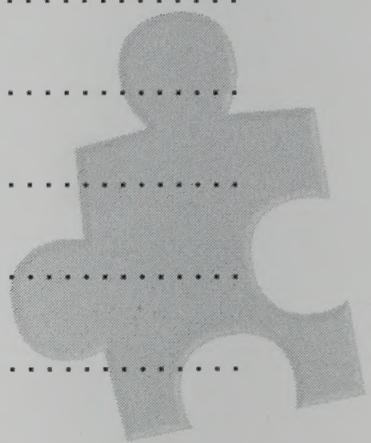
This "self-realisation" is also known as *samadhi*.

Prana vidya is generally one of the yogic meditations chosen for people with HIV/AIDS. *Prana vidya* is a sitting meditation in which, through visualisation, *prana*, or "vital energy", is controlled and distributed for healing throughout the body.

Meditation has a great effect on the mind and body, rests all systems in the body and boosts a devitalised immune system. Meditation helps to release repressed emotions, decreasing fear and pain, and releases energy for getting well and living life more fully. Through meditation one experiences a profound stillness, calm and inner peace and discovers one's own source of inner strength.

Useful Telephone Numbers

Therapist
Practitioner
Acupuncture
Aromatherapy
Bach Flower Remedies
The Bowen Therapeutic Technique
Chiropractic
Herbalism
Homeopathy
Hypnotherapy
Iridology
Massage
Meditation
Naturopathy
Nutrition and Diet
Reflexology
Reiki – The Usui System of Natural Healing
Shiatsu
Traditional Chinese Medicine
Vitamin/Mineral Supplements
Yoga







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Australian National Council
on AIDS and Related Diseases